

Message Text

SECRET

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S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 9047

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PK, IN

SUBJECT: DISCUSSION WITH AGHA SHAHI ON SANFZ

1. IN AN ASIDE AT A RECENT DINNER I ASKED AGHA SHAHI WHEN HE WAS GOING TO THE UN. HE REPLIED IN OCTOBER IN TIME TO HANDLE THE SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR FREE ZONE (SANFZ) PROPOSAL OF PAKISTAN. IT WAS EVIDENT FROM HIS REMARKS THAT HE THOUGHT THEIR PROPOSAL WOULD RECEIVE CONSIDERABLE ATTENTION AND APPROVAL BY MANY OTHER NATIONS. HE ASKED WHAT I THOUGHT OUR POSITION WOULD BE. I TOLD HIM I DID NOT KNOW, AND REMARKED THAT IT MIGHT BE DIFFICULT FOR WASHINGTON TO ANALYZE THE PROPOSAL WITHOUT MORE INFORMATION OF ITS EXACT NATURE. I ASKED WHAT AREA THEY HAD IN MIND. HE REPLIED THAT THEY WERE THINKING OF THE SUBCONTINENT PROPER ONLY. THEY HAD NOT INCLUDED AFGHANISTAN AS AFGHANISTAN WOULD MERELY SIDE WITH THE INDIAN POSITION, WHATEVER THAT MIGHT BE. I ASKED WHAT OTHER DETAILS HE COULD GIVE ME. HE SAID HE HAD ASSUMED THAT I WOULD HAVE KNOWN THAT THEY PATTERNED THEIR PROPOSAL ALMOST ENTIRELY ON THE APPROACH USED FOR LATIN AMERICA. I ASKED IF THERE WAS ANYTHING IN THEIR THINKING THAT MIGHT AFFECT THE PASSAGE OF NUCLEAR POWERED OR NECLEAR EQUIPPED SHIPS IN INTERNATIONAL WATERS. SHAHI SAID THEY HAD TAKEN THAT INTO CONSIDERATION AND THEIR

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PROPOSAL WOULD BE FOR THE LAND-MASS OF THE SUBCONTINENT

ONLY.

2. THE SECRETARY'S FORTHCOMING TRIP, AND THE FACT THAT THIS WILL BE ON THE UN AGENDA, LEAD ME TO SUGGEST THAT THE DEPARTMENT MAKE A SERIOUS STUDY OF THIS PROPOSAL IF THIS IS NOT ALREADY BEING DONE. WHILE I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT IN THE BEGINNING A PART OF THE MOTIVATION OF PAKISTAN IN INITIATING THE SANFZ PROPSAL WAS TO PUT INDIA IN AN EMBARRASSING POSITION, I BELIEVE THAT THE PAKS HAVE NOW BECOME QUITE SERIOUS IN CONSIDERING THAT THE PROPOSAL HAS MERITS WHICH WOULD BE GOOD FOR THE SUBCONTINENT AND SHOULD BE WELCOMED ELSEWHERE. IF ACHIEVABLE, THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT IT WOULD IN FACT BE IN U.S. INTERESTS AS, THEORETICALLY AT LEAST, IT WOULD PREVENT INDIA FROM TURNING TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND PUT PAKISTAN IN A POSITION WHERE SHE WOULD NOT ATTEMPT TO GO THAT ROUTE HERSELF. IT WOULD BE NICE TO THINK THAT THIS PROPOSAL MIGHT BE CONNECTED WITH THAT OF THE SHAH RESULTING IN THE PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS TO INCLUDE THE MIDDLE EAST. HERE IN THE SUBCONTINENT ONE CAN ASSUME THAT INDIA PROBABLY WOULD NOT AGREE EVEN THOUGH SHE WOULD BE PUT IN AN AWKWARD POSITION NOT TO DO SO IN VIEW OF HER PAST PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR SUCH ARRANGEMENTS ELSEWHERE. IF THERE IS ANY CHANCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT INDIA IS SUFFICIENTLY CONCERNED OVER THE WORLD-WIDE REACTION TO HER NUCLEAR EXPLOSION TO CONSIDER A WAY OUT, IT WOULD GIVE HER A GOOD ONE. SHE WOULD HAVE PROVEN HER SUPERIORITY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENHANCING HER IMAGE BY GOING ALONG WITH THE OPINION OF MUCH OF THE WORLD FOR A MORE SANE ENVIRONMENT.

3. WE HERE DO NOT, OF COURSE, HAVE THE EXPERTISE TO MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS. WE DO NOT, FOR INSTANCE, KNOW WHAT CONCERN THERE WOULD BE THAT THIS MIGHT SET A PRECEDENT WHICH COULD ACT AGAINST OUR INTERESTS IN OTHER PARTS OF THE WORLD. I DO BELIEVE, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS TIME TO THINK ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL SERIOUSLY AND NOT DISMISS IT ENTIRELY AS A PAK GIMMICK DESIGNED PRIMARILY TO SMEAR AND EMBARRASS INDIA. I ASSUME, OF COURSE, THAT WE WILL BE CONSULTING WITH OTHER POWERS INCLUDING THE SOVIET UNION, THE IRANIANS, ETC. AND HOPEFULLY CAN GET OURSELVES

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IN A POSITION WHERE WE CAN DO BETTER THAN ADOPT A BACK SEAT ROLE AT THE UNGA AS THE DISCUSSION OF THE PROPOSAL DEVELOPS.
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